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Security Council

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Wednesday, 20 December 2006, 3.25 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Al-Nasser	(Qatar)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Barttfeld
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Ikouebe
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Kodera
	Peru	Mr. Chávez
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Slovakia	Mr. Mlynár
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Ms. Phee

Agenda

The situation in the Great Lakes region

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06-67407 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Great Lakes region

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Canada, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Finland and Rwanda, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Fall to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Ms. Liberata Mulamula, Executive Secretary of the Great Lakes Conference Secretariat.

It is so decided.

I invite Ms. Mulamula to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of members to document S/2006/811, containing a letter dated 4 October 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, and document S/2006/812, containing a letter dated 13 October 2006 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General.

The Security Council will now hear a briefing by Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Fall (*spoke in French*): The interest of the Nairobi summit with regard to United Nations and, more specifically, Security Council action is four-fold: historical-political, diplomatic, substantive and forward-looking.

As to the historical-political facet, the summit was the outcome of multisectoral and converging efforts to turn the page on what seemed for decades to be an ineluctable spiral of violence, conflict, war and humanitarian and social tragedy. Turning that page of despair and opening a new chapter of regional and national destiny, managed by Governments and non-governmental stakeholders from the entire region, we find a future built on the basis of a regional vision — a proactive future set forth in Dar es Salaam in 2004 through the declaration adopted at the first summit and laid out in greater detail in Nairobi in December 2006 through the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

The countries of the region and their regional initiatives are incontrovertibly the prime actors and laureates of that great event. At their side was the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region, whose financial, technical, political and diplomatic support was outstanding. Above all, at their side, too, was this Council, which, since the Rwanda genocide of 1994, has supported and promoted with an active and ongoing policy the various attempts to settle the conflict by negotiation. It has provided for the deployment of a number of peacekeeping missions in the region, and critically and attentively supported compliance with and implementation of the peace agreements, as well as Governments, institutions and transitional mechanisms. The Council has also exerted all its influence on the course of national and regional

events through its deliberations and decisions in New York and its various working missions to Central Africa and the Great Lakes region.

Finally, I need hardly recall that the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region was the Council's initiative, supported by the African Union. The preparatory process that was recently completed was led by the United Nations in accordance with the Security Council's guidelines and with the active, coordinated participation of all United Nations agencies.

Diplomatically speaking, the Nairobi summit was characterized, more than that in Dar es Salaam, by what the late poet-President called the "common desire to coexist". That was reflected in the solemn adoption of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development and in the two-fold commitment to ratifying it speedily and to respecting its spirit and letter in good faith pending its ratification.

It is also reflected in the decision to establish, almost immediately, the political mechanism to follow up the Pact and to establish the secretariat within three months of the signing of the Pact. That spirit is also reflected in the decision to establish the headquarters of the secretariat in Burundi, the nomination of Ambassador Liberata Mulamula as the first Executive Secretary, the approval of the scale of assessments for the secretariat, the institutionalization of the special fund for reconstruction and development and the pledges of voluntary contributions to launch the fund and implement the projects that have been announced both by countries that are members of the Conference — including Tanzania, which has committed itself to provide $500,000 to the fund, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, whose President has pledged $1 million to launch the fund — and by bilateral and multilateral development partners, to which I shall return.

That collective political will was also reflected in the course of the preparatory process in the strict and innovative application of the principle of inclusiveness. That entailed the participation of non-governmental actors alongside governmental authorities, including young people, women, civil society organizations, the private sector and religious organizations. Those actors have contributed at every level of the technical and thematic working groups, which developed the various elements of the Pact, namely, projects, programmes of action, protocols and the fund.

Collective political will was also evidenced in the regional preparatory committee, which is a regional technical body, as well as in the inter-ministerial regional committee, which was responsible for the political supervision of the preparatory process leading up to the Conference.

The participation of non-governmental actors continued at the Dar es Salaam and Nairobi Summits.

With regard to the implementation phase of the Pact, non-State actors have already drafted and adopted guidelines for the participation strategy and established autonomous follow-up committees.

The principle of inclusiveness has also been manifested in the involvement in the preparatory work for the Pact of relevant organizations and regional institutions, in particular the African Accounting Council, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the African Development Bank (ADB), the African Economic Community, the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the residual secretariat of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes States (CEPGL).

In addition to the contributions made by those institutions, their involvement made it possible to ensure consistency and complementarity between the projects of the Conference, on the one hand, and the projects of the regional economic communities, on the other, during the preparatory phase. It also established the foundation for a division of labour between the Conference secretariat and the secretariats of regional economic communities as regards the next phase of the Pact's implementation.

The implementation of projects and programmes of action on economic development and regional integration was entrusted to the various regional economic communities on the basis of their areas of competence and their respective areas of operation. In that regard, we foresee the conclusion of a memorandum of understanding between the future secretariat of the Conference and the secretariats of the various regional bodies.

In addition to the advice and guidelines provided by the President and the Council, as well as the political will of the Governments and peoples of the region, the support of development partners was another major factor that facilitated the fulfilment of the goals of the preparatory process leading up to the Conference. That was made possible in particular through the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region and through the application of another principle of the preparatory process, namely, partnership. During the Nairobi Summit in particular, development partners welcomed the signing of the Pact. Partners believe that the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region is a forum with the potential to promote peace, security and development in the region.

The representative of Canada, who co-chairs the Group of Friends, reaffirmed the Group's support for the establishment of the regional follow-up mechanism, which will help to fund the mechanism until June 2007. Beyond June 2007, the Group of Friends will continue to support the process technically, politically and diplomatically.

Germany will also continue its assistance throughout 2007 through the German Agency for Technical Cooperation. It will also provide about $1 million to assist the secretariat of the Conference. Canada, for its part, has expressed particular interest in supporting the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), regional peacebuilding efforts, the establishment of regional projects for refugees, the fight against the proliferation of, and the illicit trafficking in, small arms and light weapons, demining efforts and combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

The Minister for Cooperation and Development of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the other co-Chair of the Group of Friends, has pledged €5 million to the fund. She has also offered to provide training for diplomats from member countries at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

The European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Affairs has stated that the European Commission is prepared to support the Pact and to assist countries of the region. She also emphasized the need to maintain the regional momentum that emerged from the preparatory process, so as to strengthen good political relations between States. She also pledged €5 million to bolster the technical and logistical capacities of the secretariat of the ICGLR. Furthermore, she stated that the European Union is prepared to unfreeze €45 million to finance priority projects as part of relaunching the ICGLR. In addition, she stated that priority projects of the Conference in the areas of peace and security, regional integration, democracy and good governance and humanitarian and social issues — in particular issues relating to combating the proliferation of small arms, demining, the sustainable management of natural resources, mechanisms for the certification of natural resources, the repatriation of refugees, the administrative reform of the health sector, and the reform of the education, energy and water sectors — could also be the subject of resources allocated by the fund.

The Belgian Minister for Cooperation and Development stated that his Government will make a contribution to the fund as soon as the African Development Bank begins its operations.

Lastly, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of China stated that, as part of China's cooperation with the Great Lakes region, the Chinese Development Bank would work with the ADB to support the implementation of the Pact in the areas of security, stability and development in the Great Lakes region.

With regard to substantive matters, the Pact signed at Nairobi contains five component parts: the Dar es Salaam Declaration, which constitutes its foundation; the regional protocols, which are the institutional pillars; the programmes of action, which are the programmatic pillars; the special fund for reconstruction and development, which is the financial pillar; and the regional follow-up mechanism, which is the operational instrument.

With regard to the protocols, there are 10: the protocol on non-aggression and mutual defence, the protocol on democracy and good governance, the protocol on judicial cooperation, the protocol on the prevention and suppression of the crime of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and all forms of discrimination, the protocol on combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources, the protocol on the specific zone for reconstruction and development, the protocol on the prevention and suppression of sexual violence against women and children, the protocol on protection and assistance to displaced persons, the protocol on the rights and property of returnees and, lastly, the protocol on information management.

With regard to the programmes of action, I will confine myself merely to the programme relating to peace and security. This programme includes seven priority projects: joint management of common border security, disarmament and repatriation of armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, disarmament and the promotion of development in Zone 3, development of border zones and the promotion of human security in the Great Lakes region, mine clearance and actions against mines, the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and, finally, combating transnational crime.

But with regard to the substantive section, one of the major innovations of the Conference was the interrelationship between peace and security, on the one hand, and democracy and socio-economic development on the other. In this respect, the protocol on non-aggression and mutual defence, the protocol on combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the protocol on the special reconstruction and development zone have to be implemented together, so as to ensure security, stability and good governance in the context of inter-State cooperation and of cooperation among peoples. The same interrelationship between peace and security issues and the other questions can be found also in regional projects.

Accordingly, 12 common security zones on the borders were identified in the peace and security chapter regarding the joint management of security along common borders. These areas cover the same geographical areas as do the 12 development border basins and in the border basins between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its nine neighbours.

The development objectives of these areas, whether from the standpoint of State security or from the standpoint of human security, are to promote simultaneous security and cooperation among States and security and development for the people living in these border areas. The same approach will prevail with regard to plans for disarmament and for the promotion of development in Zone 3 under the topic of peace and security. This project deals with security problems through disarming nomads whose activities are a permanent source of unrest and insecurity in the common borders between Kenya, Uganda and the Sudan. The same project also covers human security issues of the populations through the promotion of socio-economic alternative livelihoods to combat poverty and the exclusive dependence on a pastoral way of life.

The most illustrative example of this approach that combines peace and security with socio-economic development is the projects that cover the relationship between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda. These projects attack the question of disarmament and the repatriation of armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They also institutionalize Zone 10, which covers the borders of these three countries, in order to provide joint management of their common borders.

Finally, these projects bring together the three countries in the same trans-border development basin in order to propose concrete measures to revitalize the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, consisting of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda. The combined implementation of all of these projects should help create an environment conducive to peace, stability and sustainable socio-economic development, both for Governments and for border populations in this area, which is the most vulnerable part of the entire Great Lakes region.

Moreover, the implementation of these projects limited to Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda should also benefit from the effects of the implementation of wider regional protocols, such as the protocol for combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources. It is also desirable that these projects, in particular the one that deals with the joint management of security in the common border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, follow the example of lessons drawn from the implementation of Tripartite Plus One, bringing together Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda.

Several other projects and protocols deal with specific peace and security issues. That is the case of the protocol on non-aggression and mutual defence. In this context, member States have undertaken peacefully to resolve their disputes and differences through, inter alia, the regional follow-up mechanism, which gives a special role both to the Summit of Heads of State and Government and to the Troika of the Summit, which consists of the outgoing President, the incoming President and the future President, now consisting of the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, the

President of Kenya and the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

This protocol has established rules and mechanisms of cooperation to deal realistically and constructively with the sensitive management of armed opposition, armed groups and insurgent groups that move from one country to another and create a climate of suspicion, violence, insecurity and instability and, accordingly, threaten good relations among States. If they are implemented as they should be, several provisions of this protocol will help to put an end to the existence of armed groups through disarmament and the dismantling of these groups.

The implementation of this protocol will also ensure that each State concerned will take effective action against rebel groups operating on its territory or that they accept, if need be, that another country takes such measures in its stead, or that the State that does not take action or cannot take action will be brought before an extraordinary summit of heads of State to decide on what kind of collective action should be taken in respect to that State.

Other projects relating to security questions deal with combating the proliferation and the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, with preventing and combating trans-border organized crime, and with terrorism and mine clearance. These projects are managed by existing institutions, in particular the Regional Centre for Small Arms — the RECSA — which is in Kenya; the International Centre for De-mining Training, which is also in Kenya; and the Tanzanian initiative, Apopo. The main point of these projects is to provide for better coordination when it comes to implementing already existing projects in which the Conference has a special interest.

Humanitarian, social and environmental situations created or exacerbated by conflicts have had a tremendous impact on security, and they will have to be handled effectively so that they can help restore lasting peace and security.

The Pact that was signed in Nairobi deals with several of these priority matters through the protocols on violence against women and children, on the protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons, and on property rights of returnees. In this context, special attention was given to the questions of recovering lands and property for returnees, as well as the implementation of legal measures, for the first time in the world, consecrating guidelines for displaced persons, proposed by the Secretary-General several years ago.

Looking finally to the future and dealing for the time being only with the transitional period between the operation of the Office of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region and that of the Secretariat of the Conference, it is important to observe that at the meeting of the regional inter-ministerial committee held in Bangui in the Central African Republic in February 2006, the ministers decided that the transition period should not be more than one year.

In the declaration adopted at the Nairobi summit on 15 December, the heads of State and Government called upon the African Union and the United Nations to continue their assistance to the new Secretariat of the Conference for at least one year. The most important thing is to provide for a gradual transition that is flexible and harmonious. In that respect, it would be desirable for Burundi — the host-country of the Secretariat of the Conference — to be able to make available to the Secretariat the necessary infrastructure as soon as possible, and that member States pay their contributions to the budget of the Secretariat of the Conference, and that the required staff be recruited in good time. If those three conditions are met, that would reflect the good will and the political commitment of the countries concerned.

Allow me to conclude on a personal note. Major progress has been made with regard to the internal politics of the countries of the region and with regard to the relationships between the countries of the region, since the beginning of the preparatory process for the international conference — thanks to the combined effects of national strategies for restoring peace and the preparatory process for the Conference. Nevertheless, as several speakers noted at the Summit, the situation remains extremely fragile in the region, where six of the 11 countries have emerged from violent conflicts, a seventh country remains confronted by a rebellion with regional effects and an eighth country is facing the challenge of implementing three domestic peace agreements simultaneously.

Taking duly into account the fact that was highlighted by the Council in the early resolutions calling for the organization of an international conference on the Great Lakes region, namely, that interrelations between peoples and countries of the

region are such that an internal conflict can easily become a regional conflict, my view is that we must be certain the United Nations continues to play a role in preventing conflicts and in peacemaking and peacebuilding throughout the region. There must continue to be close cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations at this crucial time in the history of the region.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ibrahima Fall for his briefing. I now give the floor to Ms. Liberata Mulamula, Executive Secretary of the Great Lakes Conference Secretariat.

Ms. Mulamula: I feel honoured to address the Council today soon after my nomination as the first Executive Secretary of the Conference Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for having been given this early opportunity to speak to the Council in my new capacity.

I thank the Council for its timely initiative to convene this meeting following the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, held in Nairobi on 14-15 December 2006 and leading to the signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development.

The continued good will and the unwavering commitment of the Council to the Great Lakes region in the search for durable peace, stability and development is highly commendable. I wish to thank, in a special way, the outgoing United Nations Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, and his Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, for their tireless efforts and commitment to the peace process in the region.

You may wish to recall that the Council played an instrumental role in the convening of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. With the African Union, the Group of Friends, countries of the region and other people of good will, the Security Council spearheaded that consultative and all-inclusive process. It thus saw the convening of the first historic Summit of the International Conference process in Dar es Salaam in November 2004, which culminated in the signing of the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

The Dar es Salaam Declaration set the vision and mission for the Great Lakes, which needed to be translated into concrete action. The countries in the region, with the assistance and support of the joint African Union-United Nations Secretariat, the Group of Friends and United Nations agencies worked out tangible projects, protocols, programmes of action and follow-up mechanisms to give effect to the Dar es Salaam Declaration. Those covered priority areas under the four thematic areas of the Conference, namely, peace and security, good governance and democracy, economic development and regional integration, as well as humanitarian and social issues.

I am happy to report that the Second Summit was a culmination of that preparatory work, which led to the signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development, of which the projects, protocols and Regional Follow-up Mechanism constitute integral parts.

The Regional Follow-up Mechanism provides for the establishment of a regionally-owned Conference Secretariat, whose headquarters will be in Bujumbura, Burundi, and I will be privileged to head that Secretariat. It also established the Special Fund for Reconstruction and Development, to be housed by the African Development Bank.

The heads of State and Government have declared their commitment to bring into effect and implement the Regional Follow-up Mechanism, in particular the Conference Secretariat, within three months after the signing of the Peace Pact. The Declaration adopted at the Second Summit spells out a road map for the Conference Secretariat.

The tasks for the new Secretariat are enormous, and among them is putting into place legal, financial and administrative processes for implementing the Pact. That includes recruitment of competent staff and mobilization of resources for the start-up of the Regional Secretariat in Bujumbura, as decided by the Summit.

In that respect, I appeal to the Council to extend the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the period up to March 2007, as earlier requested by the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee, so as to assist the new Conference Secretariat in its teething stage by providing technical support and allowing a smooth handover of the residual responsibilities to the new Secretariat.

Equally, I wish to reiterate the plea of the heads of State and Government in their declaration to the United Nations and the African Union to continue their support for the new Conference Secretariat for at least one year.

It may be recalled that the United Nations, though its agencies, funds and programmes — including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Habitat and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to mention but a few — provided technical expertise, as well as financial support, in partnership with the AU and the Group of Friends, in the first phase of the International Conference process. The appeal is to see this valuable assistance and support extended to the new Conference secretariat in its formative year and in the upcoming critical phase of the implementation of the Pact.

Our new Conference secretariat is unique in its kind given the challenges it is supposed to meet, particularly that of reconstruction, and the wide range of actors with which it is supposed to engage. Of importance is the fact that it is formed by the very countries that have emerged from war, which are plagued by dilapidated infrastructure and poverty, but which are committed to putting an end to this sad chapter in the history of a conflict-ridden region.

The signing of the peace Pact by the leaders of the Great Lakes region has demonstrated their political will and determination to transform the region into a space for durable peace, stability and shared growth. The future of the Great Lakes region lies in the comprehensive implementation of the Pact. As stated by the Secretary-General, "The pact is not just a vision; it is a programme of action."

I am personally encouraged by the renewed sense of optimism and the readiness and great political will of the leaders on the one hand, and, on the other, by the enthusiasm and goodwill demonstrated by the international community at the Second Summit with respect to seeing peace prevail in the region.

In concluding, I would like to pledge my readiness to work with the Council in pursuing our common objective of achieving sustainable peace and stability in the Great Lakes region. I look forward to the Council's renewed engagement and support for the implementation phase of the International Conference process.

Lastly, Mr. President, I would like to assure you that, as a secretariat established in the framework of the International Conference on the Great lakes region, we will continue to uphold the values of ownership, partnership and complementarity that have guided the Great Lakes region peace process thus far.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ms. Mulamula for her statement.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): Mr. President, I wish to thank you for having found time in your crowded programme, in the last week of your presidency, to organize this thematic debate on the Great Lakes region. It is a reflection of the importance you attach to the issue of peace and security in that part of Africa.

My delegation welcomes the report by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, and extends its profound gratitude and congratulations to him for his dedicated and valuable service in the joint secretariat of the United Nations and the African Union in Nairobi, which supported the countries of the region in preparing for the Second Summit of countries of the Great Lakes. Mr. Fall has delivered his services with distinguished professionalism.

I also welcome Ambassador Mulamula, the new Executive Secretary for the Great Lakes secretariat, about whom I shall say a few words in a moment.

The long-awaited but meticulously prepared Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region was signed by the 11 countries of East and Central Africa in Nairobi, Kenya, on 15 December 2006. It was the culmination of an inclusive two-year process whose vision and foundation is the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development, adopted and signed at the first Summit of the countries of the region on 20 November 2004.

The Pact provides a legal and political framework for peaceful coexistence, cooperation and sustainable development among the members of the Conference. The Pact has 10 protocols, including on non-aggression and mutual defence, human rights, as well as the prevention and curbing of the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and crimes of war. The Pact further provides for collective humanitarian

responsibility to protect civilian victims of violent conflicts and of the systematic human rights violations which have characterized the region and their attendant consequences in terms of human internal displacements and massive exoduses of refugees across national boundaries.

The International Conference on the Great Lakes will have a permanent secretariat based in Bujumbura, Burundi. The Summit appointed its first Executive Secretary, Ambassador Liberata Mulamula of the United Republic of Tanzania, who is sitting with the delegation of Tanzania in the Chamber this afternoon. Ambassador Mulamula is an accomplished diplomat who has been closely associated with the evolution of the Great Lakes Conference, since its inception in 2004, as National Coordinator for Tanzania, working closely with the secretariat in Nairobi.

Ambassador Mulamula will need the accompaniment and support of the Council, the United Nations system, the Group of Friends and the international community at large beyond the three-month transition from a United Nations-African Union (AU) secretariat to a regionally owned institution. Such support and partnership could take many forms, ranging from capacity-building to information-sharing and regular consultations on issues of mutual concern regarding peace and security in the region.

It will be recalled that the Council has been seized of issues relating to the Great Lakes region for more than 10 years. Indeed, more than half of the African issues of concern to and on the agenda of the Council have related to the countries of the Great Lakes — Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, northern Uganda, the Sudan and the Central African Republic. It is with much satisfaction and gratitude that we wish to recognize the role of the Council in shepherding the peace processes in those countries to the stages at which they are today.

Rwanda is no longer on the agenda. Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have gone through democratic elections, and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is being implemented in southern Sudan. Although northern Uganda is not on the agenda of the Council, there is concern by the Council regarding the political and humanitarian situation there. It is for that reason that the Council is following with keen interest and anticipation the peace talks between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Juba, under the facilitation of the Government of Southern Sudan.

The Great Lakes Conference will be an indispensable partner of the Security Council in ensuring the restoration and maintenance of peace and security in East and Central Africa once the Pact is ratified and implementation begins. It heralds a promising future for the peace agenda in Africa. It is an edifice standing on four pillars. The first pillar is peace and security, based on renouncing the use of force, settling disputes peacefully and the prohibition of insurgent activities in each other's territories. Peace and security is also viewed as a basis for sustainable development.

The second pillar is political stability, based on democratic principles, the rule of law, respect for human rights and good governance.

The third pillar is development in support of peace and security and democratic institutions — sustainable development based on economic cooperation in the use of natural resources — and regional integration. The Great Lakes region has been designated as a specific reconstruction zone with a special fund for contributions from Member States and the international community.

The fourth pillar is international cooperation and partnership with other institutions in the maintenance of peace and security and the promotion of economic and social development and environmental sustainability. The United Nations and the African Union are foremost partners in this endeavour.

The International Conference draws its mandate and strength from the inclusive nature of its stakeholders, which include civil society, women, youth, the business community and Government at various levels of participation. All of them converge in a special follow-up mechanism to ensure accountability in implementation and in the delivery of peace dividends.

This new institution in Africa bears all the hallmarks of what the United Nations stands for: the pursuit of peace, security, development and respect for human rights, and the attainment of larger freedom in a comprehensive manner. We should give this institution our unqualified support.

Mr. Kodera (Japan): Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to extend my appreciation to you for

convening today's debate. It is very timely, because the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region was successfully concluded just last Friday in Nairobi. I would also like to thank Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, and Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, Executive Secretary of the Great Lakes Conference Secretariat for updating us on the outcome of the Summit and on the process that led to its being convened.

Despite the difficulties posed by the need to reschedule the meeting several times, the Second Summit was convened and the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region was signed. Japan, as a member of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region, welcomes the fact that the Summit produced such a successful outcome.

Let me briefly touch upon the Pact. The Pact includes a protocol on non-aggression and mutual defence in the Great Lakes region. As the protocol is a comprehensive security agreement covering the whole of the Great Lakes region, we consider it to be an epoch-making accomplishment. The Pact also includes protocols to promote democracy and good governance and to advance economic development and the local regional integration process, as well as to address social and humanitarian issues on a regional basis. I believe that the Pact will provide appropriate guidance to each of its States parties in their future efforts to achieve peace and stability in the region.

In February of this year, at Addis Ababa, Japan hosted the Conference on the Consolidation of Peace, in the framework of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), with co-organizers that included the United Nations. At the Conference, which was attended by more than 400 participants from 73 countries, the importance of ownership on the part of African countries and the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach in the consolidation of peace were reiterated. We welcome the Pact particularly because it also reflects what was discussed at the TICAD Conference.

Japan applauds the considerable efforts made by all parties concerned. We also commend those who assisted the summit process, including the joint secretariat of the African Union and the United Nations, Mr. Fall and other international partners. Allow me also to recall that the orderly holding of democratic elections in Burundi and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo played a significant role in the successful conclusion of the Summit.

We welcome the establishment of the regional follow-up mechanism. It was decided that the Conference Secretariat for the follow-up mechanism should be located in Bujumbura, Burundi, and Ambassador Liberata Muramura of Tanzania was nominated to serve as the Executive Secretary. Japan considers that the mandate of the Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region should be incorporated into the regional follow-up mechanism when the mechanism begins its functions.

In connection with the future engagement of the United Nations in the Great Lakes region, I would like to note that the Peacebuilding Commission has already begun to address the case of Burundi as its first country-specific activity. In the implementation of the Pact, good coordination and cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission is also needed.

As the consolidation of peace is a major pillar of the TICAD process, since 2003 Japan has extended assistance to Africa amounting to over $400 million. In the light of the importance of the Great Lakes region to peace and stability in Africa as whole, my Government has placed special emphasis on providing assistance in such areas as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, including the integration of child ex-combatants; demining; humanitarian aid, including food; the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons; and the reconstruction and development of communities. In order to contribute to the process of consolidating peace, we have made a special effort to provide assistance in such areas as economic development, including agriculture; social development, including sanitation and education; and capacity-building.

In addition to economic assistance, Japan has been engaging in political dialogue with the countries concerned. Just to mention some of the recent dialogues, Japan's Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Masayoshi Hamada, visited Burundi at the end of October and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in early December, and the heads of State or Foreign Ministers of Tanzania, the Sudan, Rwanda, the Republic of the Congo and Burundi recently visited Japan. In each instance, we took the opportunity to reiterate the importance of stabilizing the region.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that it is Japan's intention to give all possible support to such efforts, so that lasting peace and stability in the Great Lakes region may be attained. We also look forward to further enhanced efforts by the Governments in the region towards that end, under the principle of ownership.

Mr. Lacroix (France) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like at the outset to thank Mr. Ibrahima Fall and Ms. Liberata Mulamula for their presentations this afternoon.

The holding of the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region is an important event with respect to a lasting return to peace and stability in the region, which has experienced harsh ordeals. Resolution of the problems of the Great Lakes region involves national peace processes, which the United Nations has supported in recent years in Burundi and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, they also require the development of regional cooperation in areas of common interest.

The high level of participation at the Nairobi Summit and the documents signed there show that the desire of the States concerned to promote such cooperation, in the spirit of the United Nations Charter, is strong.

I should like to stress two areas for vital cooperation that are identified by the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region. The first relates to security. The Security Council has often noted that many security problems in the Great Lakes region have a trans-border dimension. Increasingly, it has focused on this regional dimension, for example by adopting resolution 1653 (2006) early this year.

The second concerns economic relations. All States of the region have a clear interest in cooperating to ensure economic development and to make the best of their natural resources. We consider that ownership by the States of the region with respect to security and regional economic cooperation is essential. The African Union and the United Nations provided significant support for the preparation and convening of the Dar es Salaam and Nairobi Summits. But it is the continued commitment of the States of the region, within the context of the follow-up mechanism, that will determine the success of this approach. My delegation therefore welcomes the determination of the countries of the Great Lakes region to meet their common challenges together.

Finally, I wish to thank the Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania for having prepared the draft presidential statement, which France supports.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I too wish to start by thanking Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, and Ambassador Liberata Mulamula for their briefings. Denmark appreciates this opportunity to discuss the issue of peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region. We would like to associate ourselves with the statement to be made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

The adoption of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region at the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region is encouraging. It could certainly be a useful contribution to advancing the peace and security agenda of the region. Political will and dedication are the driving force in promoting peace and stability. We hope to see strong commitment from the core countries with regard to implementation and the establishment of an efficient follow-up mechanism with regional actors in the lead.

The current situation in the Great Lakes region is promising. The successful conclusion of the transition processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi and the ongoing peace negotiations between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army give rise to optimism.

However, the situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is still very difficult, and the continuing deterioration of the situation in Darfur and its spillover to neighbouring countries are causes for great concern. They constitute a significant threat to international peace and stability in the larger region. We should not allow the positive developments in the Great Lakes region to be lost in yet another regional conflict.

I would like to stress that the positive developments in the Great Lakes region to a large extent are a consequence of the improved neighbourly relations and the close cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations.

Allow me to use this opportunity to commend Tanzania and South Africa for the constructive role they have played, and continue to play, in support of peace in the region.

Let me conclude with a few words on the protection of civilians and on impunity. Despite the progress just mentioned, the need for protection of civilian populations continues to be immense throughout the region. Governments in the region have the primary responsibility to protect their own populations; if they fail to do so, they leave that responsibility to the international community.

Finally, in order to secure long-term stability and respect for the rule of law, all States concerned must take action to bring to justice perpetrators of violations of human rights and international law. Impunity should not be the order of the day, and all States must cooperate with international criminal courts, including the International Criminal Court, to facilitate investigation and to ensure apprehension and surrender of suspects. Where the United Nations is engaged, it should be part and parcel of its mandate to assist States in eliminating impunity.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): We too wish at the outset to thank Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, for his statement. We join previous speakers in congratulating him on the commendable work he carried out during the preparations for the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. We also thank Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, the first Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Secretariat, and wish her every success as she assumes her important position. We would like also to add our voice to those congratulating the countries of the Great Lakes region on convening the Summit and signing the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

Slovakia fully associates itself with the statement to be made later by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union. In our national capacity, we would like to add a few comments.

The signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region was a major step towards reconciliation and development in that region, which has been troubled for so long. To some extent, the signing of the Pact was a logical consequence of the progress achieved in the field of peacebuilding and democratization in the region.

In previous years, we mostly received messages of desperation and tragedy from the Great Lakes area. Now, finally, messages of hope have begun to come from the region. Democratic elections in Burundi and just recently in the Democratic Republic of the Congo concluded the transition and will hopefully pave the way for a more secure, stable and prosperous Great Lakes region. Also, the negotiations between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army taking place in Juba finally provide, after 20 years of conflict, a viable chance for sustainable peace in northern Uganda and the surrounding region.

However, the positive messages coming from the Great Lakes region should not lead us to complacency. At least two parties to the Pact on Security, Stability and Development — the Sudan and the Central African Republic — are currently affected by the crisis in Darfur. Despite positive political developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, its eastern parts continue to suffer from the presence of rebel groups. We could go on by mentioning widespread poverty, problems in the management of natural resources, thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons, further thousands of former combatants waiting for reintegration, weak and unreformed security sectors, massive violations of human rights and many other threats that could possibly fuel new conflict.

The countries of the region now have a major tool for consolidating the results achieved so far. It provides the countries of the region with an important instrument that can help them overcome mutual problems and prejudices resulting from turbulent past relations. The Pact is a cornerstone to be built upon. We highly commend the comprehensive approach taken in drafting the Pact. Its main parts cover peace and security, democracy and good governance, economic development and regional cooperation, along with humanitarian and social issues — that is, all the major issues that the Security Council has been considering when addressing Great Lakes conflicts.

Yet, the signing of the Pact is just the beginning, though an important one. Peace consolidation in the Great Lakes region will require a great deal of additional effort. The implementation of such an ambitious and comprehensive Pact will require a massive concentration of human, material and financial

resources by the countries of the region, as well as by the international community. Local ownership, partnership and complementarity, as highlighted by both Special Representative Fall and Ambassador Mulamula, lie at the core of the consolidation and peacebuilding efforts and endeavours.

Finally, we wish to thank the Tanzanian delegation for preparing the draft presidential statement, which has our full support.

Ms. Phee (United States of America): First, my delegation would like to join others in thanking Special Representative Fall and Ambassador Mulamula for their comprehensive briefings today. We also wish to congratulate them both: Mr. Fall for his recent leadership of the Conference, and Ambassador Mulamula on her new appointment. We wish her well on that new endeavour.

The United States also wishes to congratulate the countries of the Great Lakes region for convening the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. The timing of this Conference is opportune, following the historic elections and peaceful transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and coming at a juncture when we see positive signs of momentum towards greater stability in much of Central Africa. The Conference underscores a sense of hope and cautious optimism for the future of the region.

The United States also welcomes the Pact on Security, Stability and Development signed by core countries at the International Conference. This is a positive and encouraging step. We would note the obvious, however. Whether the lofty goals contained in the Pact make a real difference will be measured more by the follow-on action of the parties than by the words in the document. We were therefore heartened by the statements of the leaders that they intend to take their commitment seriously. We urge them to do so.

We believe the principles in the Pact are important. They lay a solid foundation for peace and security in the Great Lakes region. They also provide a useful framework to guide relations among the countries of the region as they work together to reach the goals of democracy and good governance and to realize the development possibilities of the region.

The United States remains convinced that peace, stability and development can prevail in this region of Africa, which, regrettably, has suffered from horrific conflict and violence for far too long. To that end, we will continue to encourage such regional efforts and leadership, including the Tripartite-Plus process, which we are facilitating.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset allow me to commend you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on the situation in the Great Lakes region. I also wish to thank Mr. Ibrahima Fall and Ms. Liberata Mulamula for their presentations.

Let me also take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to the Government of Kenya for hosting the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region. The Conference, which was convened under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union, offered member countries and other international partners the opportunity to exchange views on ways to transform the region into an area of sustainable peace and security, political and social stability, shared growth and development.

The Great Lakes region has suffered a long period of conflicts with devastating consequences. An area that had over a decade become a theatre of internecine conflicts that have led to all sorts of violence — including forced internal and external displacement of people, most of whom were already in a state of desolation — now seems to be gradually returning to normalcy.

In this regard, we welcome the signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region in Nairobi on 15 December 2006. The desire of the regional leaders to settle disputes through negotiation, good offices, investigation, mediation, conciliation or any other political means based on a mechanism mutually agreed upon is highly commendable.

The Great Lakes region, the Democratic Republic of the Congo in particular, is endowed with enormous natural resources. Therefore, given stability, the area could see tremendous development. The successful conduct of the elections and the smooth transition in Congo and the other countries in the region — Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda — provide them an atmosphere conducive to continuing their political and economic reconstruction processes towards the establishment of stable and democratic societies and modern State institutions, based on the rule of law.

We also welcome the fact that the States of the region have agreed to put in place regional rules and mechanisms for combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Such exploitation constitutes a violation of the States' right of permanent sovereignty over their natural resources and represents a serious source of insecurity, instability, tension and conflicts in the region. In this connection, we urge member States to seriously consider putting in place useful mechanisms such as the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. This Scheme has proved to be quite useful in containing the illegal exploitation and smuggling of diamonds and, hopefully, in effectively limiting the financing of conflicts.

It is important that political systems are democratic and inclusive, and that they engender a climate of trust and participation by all. Good governance and the rule of law will create an environment conducive to reconstruction. It is essential to take decisive actions against corruption, ensure respect for human rights and fight the climate of impunity and politically driven justice prevailing in the wider region. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Court have a central role to play in the efforts to bring to justice those responsible for serious human rights violations and war crimes.

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, repatriation or resettlement of the various armed groups is a cardinal component of the plans for stabilizing the whole region. It is important that the international community not disengage too rapidly and that an adequate United Nations presence be maintained in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi.

The future of the countries in the region must be built on good neighbourliness and regional cooperation. Reviving the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries could prove promising for fostering and strengthening regional economic integration.

We applaud the Peacebuilding Commission for approving $25 million for Burundi for post-conflict reconstruction. We hope that sometime in the future, when all is settled in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Peacebuilding Commission will also consider the case of that country.

We also wish to appeal to the leadership in the area to show commitment and determination in ensuring the speedy and effective implementation of the Pact. Needless to say, the determination of the leadership to transform the region into an area of lasting peace, stability and prosperity will require sustained and coordinated support by all parties involved, including the countries of the region, the African Union, the United Nations and the Group of Friends, co-chaired by Canada and the Netherlands, as well as other international partners. The Security Council should remain supportive of this undertaking.

To that end we support the plea for an extension of the term of office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who has been doing excellent work, for another year. We also wish Ms. Mulamula success in her new assignment.

Mr. Johnston (United Kingdom): Allow me to begin by aligning my delegation with the statement that will be made later in this debate by the Permanent Representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

The United Kingdom is committed to security, stability and development in the Great Lakes region of Africa. We are encouraged by the progress that the people and Governments of the region have made towards those goals. As has been noted earlier in this debate, nowhere has that achievement been more vividly demonstrated, particularly in recent weeks, than in the successful conduct of the presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The transformation we are witnessing in that country, as well as in Burundi and elsewhere in the region, to a situation in which peace, not conflict, is becoming the norm gives us real hope, despite the many challenges that have also been referred to in today's debate.

In support of that transformation process, my Government is providing half a billion pounds in bilateral development and humanitarian programmes. We will continue to sustain a substantial donor effort in the region, bilaterally and through the European Union.

The Great Lakes process has played its part in this transformation. Its inherent value is that it brings together all the key players and allows them to sit together and talk at the highest political levels, as well as at operational levels. The problems that the countries and peoples of the region face are shared

problems, and therefore the solutions must also be shared.

We therefore welcome the commitment of the leaders of the Governments of the region to implement the Pact on Security, Stability and Development. As others have noted, regional ownership of this process is going to be crucial. The Pact provides a framework that should be conducive to revitalizing regional cooperation, including interregional trade links, which will help to ensure that peace and stability take root sustainably.

I would like to place on record our belief that, in appointing Ambassador Mulamula of Tanzania, the countries of the region have chosen a first-rate Executive Secretary, and we look forward to working with her and supporting her. We welcomed her statement. We are also grateful to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing today and for the work he has contributed to this process and this outcome.

It is our hope that the commitments made in Nairobi will have, over time, a transformative effect on security, stability and development throughout the region. Only last month, this Council recorded its support for efforts aimed at bringing an end to the long-running conflict in northern Uganda, which has had terrible regional implications; and only yesterday, the Council reiterated its deep concern about the worsening situation in the Darfur region of the Sudan, which also has desperate regional implications. The Sudan, of course, is one of the signatories of the Nairobi Pact.

In that context, I think it is important to say that the verbal commitments in the Pact are therefore a necessary step, but far from sufficient to achieve the goals we share. Ambassador Mulamula, in her statement, noted what the Secretary-General had said to the effect that the Pact is not just a vision — it is a programme for action. Therefore, we feel strongly that action and implementation will be the most important and, indeed, the hardest part and the real test for the Governments concerned, individually and collectively. In that context, my delegation would endorse wholeheartedly what the Ambassador of Denmark has just said about the issues of protection of civilians and impunity.

We urge the countries of the region, therefore, to work together and urgently to achieve security, stability and development for all their citizens. In doing so, they can be assured of the support of my Government and, I believe, of the United Nations as a whole.

Finally, I should like to thank the delegation of Tanzania for its leadership in producing the draft presidential statement, which we look forward to adopting. As it is also one of that delegation's final appearances in the Council, my delegation would like to thank it for all the work it has done on this and other issues on the Council's agenda.

Mr. Ikouebe (Congo) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for organizing this debate just a few days after the holding in Nairobi of the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. For us, the outcome of that important event represents a turning point in the search for peace, stability and sustainable development in a region that, for far too long, has been the theatre of armed conflict that has utterly vanquished any real hope for sustainable growth commensurate with its natural and human potential.

I also wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to all the stakeholders who tirelessly committed themselves to providing various forms of support to initiatives to promote sustainable development in the Great Lakes region. I refer in particular to the Group of Friends; the multilateral partnership of the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union; and non-governmental organizations, whose contribution to the peace process in that region has been decisive.

I refer, too, to my friend Mr. Ibrahima Fall, sitting beside me today. I believe that he will understand full well the expression of my Government's deepest gratitude to him, not only for the detailed information on the Conference that he has provided to the Council, but also and above all for the key role he has played as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General throughout his mandate in coordinating the process of the Conference at the regional level. Our region owes him a great deal for his commitment and expertise.

I should also like to reiterate my delegation's congratulations to Ms. Mulamula on her appointment as first Executive Secretary of the Great Lakes Conference Secretariat.

Following the Dar es Salaam Summit in November 2004, which issued the Dar es Salaam Declaration calling on States of the region to work for peace, security and development in the Great Lakes, we welcome today the outstanding progress achieved throughout this year, which has just been crowned with success in Nairobi. In point of fact, whereas yesterday the image of the Great Lakes region in the eyes of the world was one of desolation and destruction as a result of conflicts that undermined all development efforts and led to the spread of HIV/AIDS and multiple human tragedies resulting from flows of refugees and displaced persons, we can welcome the fact today that democracy and development are now taking root in some of the countries concerned.

One example of that is the successful conclusion of the transitions in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo following democratic, free and transparent elections, to the satisfaction of the international community. We have also seen progress in the conclusion of agreements between certain Governments and rebel factions in the region, and in particular the agreement ending hostilities between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army, signed on 26 August, and the agreement between the Government of Burundi and the Forces nationales de libération-Palipehutu, signed on 7 September. The signing of those historic agreements will, we hope, put an end to decades of conflict that have claimed an especially high toll of victims, particularly among women and children.

My delegation therefore wishes to welcome the convening of the Second Summit, in which the Congo, a country of the region, played an active part. The outcome of the Summit — held under the evocative theme of regional peace, security and development — is a harbinger of hope, and my delegation has several comments to make on that issue.

First, as to the designation of the Great Lakes region as a zone of reconstruction and development, we hope above all that the region will continue to enjoy the support of the regional States themselves and of the international community, which helped to launch the peace process. We hope that the special fund for reconstruction and development will move on schedule into its operational phase so as to consolidate the positive achievements made in this process, which Member States must now take ownership of and treat, individually and collectively, as a platform for joint action.

We also welcome the adoption of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, which represents a turning point in the history of the region. In point of fact, the Pact gives States concerned and the international community an essential tool for action in the restoration of peace and the promotion of cooperation in that long-troubled region. It is therefore urgent for us to send an encouraging signal to our partners so that each of the signatory States will ratify the Pact as soon as possible.

The success of the Second Summit is a positive sign of the culmination of the peace process in our region. The international community, including the United Nations above all, is therefore called on to continue to support regional efforts, and in particular to ensure the implementation of the Pact, which is endowed with several useful tools, including protocols that should contribute to strengthening regional initiatives. The protocols cover such areas as non-aggression and mutual defence, and judicial cooperation in preventing and suppressing the crime of genocide, crimes of war, crimes against humanity and all forms of discrimination. There is also the protocol on the illegal exploitation of natural resources and, lastly, the protocol on the restoration of democracy and good governance.

We very much hope that the international community will continue to support — not just for the moment — the first steps to be taken by the institution we have established.

I cannot end my intervention without thanking the delegation of Tanzania, which has introduced in the Council a draft presidential statement, which my delegation fully supports.

Mr. Barttfeld (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, and Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, Executive Secretary of the secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, for their presence here today. We also thank the Qatari presidency for organizing this open debate on such an important issue as peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

Recent historic events in the region, such as the taking of office by democratically elected Governments in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, constitute progress that, despite the important role of the international community, would not have been possible without the close and resolute cooperation of the Governments of the subregion, the efforts of the African Union and other multilateral bodies, and the holding of international conferences — such as the one on peace, security, democracy and development in the Great Lakes region that took place in Dar es Salaam in November 2004 and the Second Summit-level meeting of the same conference, held in Nairobi from 14 to 15 December 2006.

Nor would they have been possible without increased cooperation between the Security Council and regional organizations in the taking of decisions, the tireless efforts of the peacekeeping missions in the region, the assistance provided by donor countries and the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region, the constant monitoring by non-governmental organizations of human rights violations by parties to conflicts and, lastly, the parties themselves, who adopted positions whereby they gave priority to peace over their personal interests.

We would like to highlight in particular the importance of the signing, during the Second Summit in Nairobi, of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development of the Great Lakes Region and the declaration on its implementation, through which the heads of State of the subregion committed themselves to ensure that the Great Lakes region will regain its stability and become a region of peace and prosperity.

We also believe that the establishment of a regional Conference secretariat is a great step forward in ensuring peace in the region. In that regard, we congratulate Ambassador Liberata Mulamula of the United Republic of Tanzania for her nomination as Executive Secretary of that body.

The new phase now beginning will also require great efforts and coordinated assistance in order to establish stable institutions for the reconstruction and development of the countries of the region during the post-conflict phase. It will entail bringing those who violated human rights and humanitarian law to justice, as well as the active participation of the Peacebuilding Commission, which has, for example, already decided to assist the efforts of the Government of Burundi to strengthen peace. Those are all necessary elements in generating the incentives needed to reduce the probability of the recurrence of conflict in the region.

However, we must also underscore that granting amnesty for serious human rights violations as part of a strategy to end a conflict usually does not lead to positive results in the long term, given that combatants rarely give up their weapons and lasting peace is rarely achieved when reconciliation is not a viable option for society. It is possible to end the culture of impunity only by meting out impartial justice for all violators of human rights and international humanitarian law. That, in turn, would provide a solid foundation for long-term stability in the countries of the region.

We would like in particular to highlight the special vulnerability of children affected by the various conflicts in the region. Unfortunately, girls and boys in the region continue to be recruited, abducted and even murdered. Those attacks are committed by different armed groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army. In some areas members of the armed forces are themselves responsible for committing those types of abuse of children. We therefore underscore the need to put an end to the climate of impunity that facilitates such abuse. We would also like to reiterate the responsibility of Governments to protect their civilian populations.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the delegation of Tanzania for its work on the draft presidential statement, which we support.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the President of the Security Council for organizing this important event. We would also like to thank Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, and Ambassador Liberata Mulamula for their detailed briefings on the subject under consideration.

The Russian Federation has come to this meeting with certain encouraging facts in mind. National elections were held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the first time in 40 years, as a result of which a conclusive victory was won by the incumbent, President Kabila. Despite the ongoing instability, especially in the eastern part, life in the country is returning to normal. Burundi has now entered the peacebuilding phase. Following the ceasefire agreements signed between the Government of Uganda

and the insurgent group the Lord's Resistance Army, there seems now to be a possibility of resolving the problem of northern Uganda.

The drafting and adoption of confidence-building measures will assist the efforts of intergovernmental and multilateral security mechanisms, such as the Tripartite Plus One Commission. The United Nations and the Security Council are playing an active role in the peacebuilding process, with Council missions visiting the region annually. It is gratifying that their work and recommendations are always considered crucial by the leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda.

We are fully aware of the continuing risks and difficulties: the danger of a resumption of inter-ethnic clashes, difficulties in the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, illegal flows of small arms and light weapons, mercenaries, the use of child soldiers, uncontrolled borders, violence against civilians, the dire humanitarian situation and so on. However, at the moment there is in the region a critical mass of positive factors that is making it possible for the States of the region to move to a new level of relations.

A productive step towards the full normalization of the situation in the Great Lakes region was last week's holding at Nairobi of the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region under the aegis of the United Nations and the African Union. The main outcome of that meeting was the signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development, which provides new prospects for post-conflict reconstruction and development. We are certain that the work of the Conference will help to resolve many interconnected regional problems.

However, I would like once again to stress that the effectiveness of the Conference will depend primarily upon the consistency of the actions of the main actors in the implementation of the agreements they have concluded. In that regard, we believe that the establishment of a follow-up mechanism at the Summit constitutes a promising step for the future. That will make it possible to consistently implement the entire set of decisions taken at the Summit.

I should like to address another important topic. For many decades, the natural and human resources of this very rich region were exploited in an illegal and barbaric manner, with the money produced from that exploitation helping to fuel ongoing conflicts in the region. It is now high time to radically change the situation and utilize the remaining potential offered by the raw materials of the countries of the Great Lakes region in the interests of their peoples and their States.

I would like to take this opportunity to express gratitude to the United Republic of Tanzania, South Africa, the regional Preparatory Committee, the National Coordinators, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, his staff and his Office for their efforts which made it possible, in a successful and productive way, to hold the second stage of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.

We are grateful to the delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania for having prepared the official Presidential Statement of the Council, and we fully support it.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation thanks the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Fall, for his briefing. We would also like to thank the Executive Secretary of the Great Lakes Conference Secretariat, Ms. Mulamula, for her briefing.

China welcomes the successful convening of the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the signing and adoption of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region. We commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the African Union and the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region for their contribution to the preparations for the Conference.

In recent years, there have been some encouraging developments in the situation in the Great Lakes Region. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi successfully held historic elections. Many countries gradually came out of the shadows of conflict and actively carried out the work of post-war reconstruction.

Of course, this region is still faced with problems, such as poverty and disease. Some countries are still either suffering from armed conflict or facing the arduous challenge of peacebuilding.

The international community cannot shirk its responsibility to assist the countries in the region to quickly eliminate armed conflict, achieve national reconciliation and move forward along the road of sustainable development. It should also continue to increase economic assistance to the countries in the region. We hope that the Peacebuilding Commission will also give positive attention to the post-conflict reconstruction process in the Great Lakes region.

Peace and development in that region are inseparable from the ownership of the process by the countries concerned; and they need to solve the relevant issues properly within the regional framework and through dialogue and consultation. They should also further consolidate the good-neighbourly relations among the countries.

The signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region marks the occasion for the countries of the region to enter a new path towards solving their disputes independently and to develop their economies through solidarity and self-reliance. This should be conducive to quickly easing the regional conflict, accelerating post-war reconstruction and achieving lasting peace and security in the region. We earnestly hope that the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region will continue to provide a platform for the countries in the region to carry out constructive dialogue and cooperation and that it will strive to make a positive contribution to the achievement of sustainable peace and development in the region.

As a friend of the countries in the region, China has followed the situation in the Great Lakes region with close attention and has done its share to assist the countries concerned to end conflict and achieve development. China actively participated in the relevant United Nations peacekeeping operations and provided assistance, within its capabilities, to the countries concerned through bilateral channels. We are ready to continue to strengthen this comprehensive cooperation with the countries in the region in the framework of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum, so as to make a positive contribution to achieving lasting peace, stability and development in the region.

Finally, I would like to thank the delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania for drafting the Presidential Statement, which we support.

Mr. Chávez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Mr. Ibrahima Fall, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, for his report. I would also like to thank Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, the Executive Secretary of the Great Lakes Conference Secretariat, for her briefing just a few moments ago.

With the signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, the Governments and the peoples represented there have shown that they now wish to work towards security based on democracy and a cooperative and non-aggressive approach in the region. This means recognition of the fact that the countries are facing new and old threats to their security. These threats are multidimensional in nature, the economic and social components of which are fundamental elements of those conflicts. It, therefore, is necessary to have a comprehensive approach to the prevention of these conflicts, and cooperation is required to ensure stability, be this on a bilateral basis or through multilateral mechanisms.

This approach is in line with the desire for rapprochement expressed by the Government of Peru and the other member countries of the Andean Community in our own Andean zone of peace. The Great Lakes Pact reinforces and respects the security and independence of each State and ensures that no one will permit this territory to be used by rebel groups to destabilize any other country or Government. Nor will they be able on their own, for example, to enter the territory of another country, whether it is to attack rebel groups or to take the national resources.

As a sign of this new era in the Great Lakes region, the international community and the Group of Friends of the region must contribute to strengthening inclusive, democratic Governments and the democratic exercise of power that represents the interests of the people. In the immediate future, this calls for an all-out war to eradicate poverty and to establish reconstruction programmes, good governance and the consolidation of peace, putting national wealth at the service of people, by building socio-economic institutions and providing basic services, such as security, education, health and food, as well as building an economic base and a solid infrastructure as a means of developing a sustainable economy within each country and linked with the rest of the world. This change also requires a serious

transformation with respect to the humanitarian situation and to human rights.

In this connection, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is definitely recognized as a very important strategic country. It is necessary to support the process of installation of democratic institutions directly, so that the State can be in a position to provide the minimum services to its people — security, health and education. Besides external efforts, the domestic leadership needs to focus on serious democratic rebuilding of the country. We cannot run the risk of having the human and financial investment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo be lost owing to the frustrations felt by the citizens, which might eventually lead to a resurgence of the crisis. For this reason, we must constantly monitor and follow up the sanctions regime established for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We need the support of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and of the neighbouring countries — in particular, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, as well as the Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia — to ensure that there is effective control over the territory and over the access to land, air and water routes, so that they cannot be used by illegal armed groups trafficking in weapons or for the illegal export of natural resources. MONUC must continue, as it has been doing, to coordinate closely with the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) and with the United Nations Office in Burundi to strengthen the regional impact of the effective presence of the United Nations in the region.

Since the beginning of the year, the Security Council has witnessed a process of dialogue and aimed at achieving a ceasefire and reaching a political understanding between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda. For Peru, there can be no peace if impunity continues to exist. For that reason, my country is following developments in the Juba peace process and hopes that the humanitarian and development needs in northern Uganda will be met in accordance with the comments made by that country's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence. We must continue to follow developments in Burundi as well.

In conclusion, I wish to express the hope that the United Nations, in cooperation with the African Union and relevant subregional groups, can assist in the follow-up process, because peace in the region will have an effect throughout the continent. We hope that that experience will serve as a stimulus for finding satisfactory solutions to other crises, such as those in Darfur, Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia. We therefore welcome the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and the implementation process, which is in its initial phase. We wish to thank the Tanzanian delegation for the draft presidential statement that the Council will adopt, which we support.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): I would like to thank Special Representative Ibrahima Fall for his comprehensive and thorough briefing on the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Our thanks go also to Ambassador Mulamula for her statement, along with our best wishes for success in her new job. Greece fully associates itself with the statement to be made later on by the Permanent Representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

The region of the Great Lakes has been the scene of recurrent ethnic violence and interrelated crises in recent years. On many occasions they presented a considerable challenge to the international community's capacity for crisis response and management. However, in recent years, considerable, albeit painstaking improvement has taken place. There has been a remarkable national reconciliation in Rwanda; a successful organization of elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with overwhelming participation by the Congolese people and the election of democratic legislative and executive authorities; peaceful and democratic elections in Burundi that led to a new President and Government; and the ceasefire agreement between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda.

Today, the countries of the area, as well as the international community, have gradually realized that achieving peace, stability, security and development in the Great Lakes region should entail a strong regional dimension. The Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, held in Nairobi last week, is the culmination of efforts put forward by all interested parties in that direction. The Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, adopted at the Summit, constitutes a milestone in the cooperation between the States of the region.

We believe that it is now crucial to implement the protocols and programmes of action included in the Pact, through the regional follow-up mechanism. The countries of the area must demonstrate their political will in implementing the mechanism and making the Special Fund operational. The international community should stand ready to assist African countries in that endeavour.

In that respect, the Security Council, besides following closely the post-transitional phase in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi, could also focus on the regional context by better assisting the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement of ex-combatants, as well as by improving monitoring and strict implementation of the arms embargo, especially as regards small arms. The Council should direct peacekeeping operations to pay special attention to strengthening border security, in particular in view of the spillover effect of the Darfur crisis into Chad and the Central African Republic.

The Security Council, as well as the United Nations system in general, including the Peacebuilding Commission, should also concentrate on facilitating solutions for several key issues of the region, such as combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources. In that respect, we are ready to support proposals for special mechanisms, taking into account existing initiatives such as the Kimberley Process for diamonds and the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance for illegal logging.

We firmly believe that ending impunity in the Great Lakes region, as well as establishing the foundations for sustainable economic development, addressing humanitarian and human rights issues, supporting institution-building, combating corruption and strengthening the rule of law and good governance, will contribute to the promotion of peace and stability in the region. In that respect, the International Criminal Court, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system in general could prove to be valuable.

We would like to commend the efforts of all the participants in the Nairobi Summit, in particular Tanzania and South Africa, the joint African Union-United Nations Secretariat and Special Representative Ibrahima Fall.

We believe that the Nairobi Summit took place at a truly historic juncture for the region of the Great Lakes. It provides us all with a unique opportunity to chart the course towards peace, security and development for millions of people who have known little else than oppression, violence and poverty.

The Security Council should express its support to that ongoing process, and for that reason we fully subscribe to the draft presidential statement prepared by Tanzania, for which we thank that delegation.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Qatar.

I should like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, for his briefing on the Great Lakes region. I also wish to thank Ambassador Mulamula, first Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Our thanks go also to the Secretary-General for his continuing efforts.

Allow me to congratulate the States and Governments of the Great Lakes region, on the success of the Second Summit, held in Nairobi on 15 December 2006 and on the conclusion of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region. That success was undoubtedly achieved thanks to the genuine political will of the leaders of the countries of the region and to the excellent efforts to prepare for and support the Conference. We salute the efforts made by the joint Secretariat of the African Union and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

For the second time this year, the Council has convened an important meeting to consider the situation in the Great Lakes region. We wish to recall the success of the Dar es Salaam Conference in November 2004, a subject that was taken up in an open debate by the Security Council at the ministerial level (see S/PV.5359), followed by the adoption of resolution 1653 (2006). Following these positive steps, the peoples of the region can surely look forward to the implementation of cooperation arrangements, as reflected in the convening of the Second Summit, as well as in the adoption and signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region. We look forward to the ratification of the Pact and to its implementation.

The aspirations and hopes expressed in the Pact and in the Declaration must be fulfilled, in particular through dynamism and political will on the part of the leaders of the Great Lakes region, as reflected in the declaration adopted following the Summit. That will enable the region to restore stability, peace and prosperity.

Positive and concrete steps emerged from the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government, including a regional follow-up mechanism for the Pact through the Conference Secretariat. We congratulate Burundi on having agreed to host the Secretariat, as well as Tanzania on the appointment of one of its nationals as its Executive Secretary.

Mandatory contributions to the secretariat's activities will be necessary and vital for the implementation of the Pact and to mobilize influential sectors of civil society. Issues relating to women, youth, media and the private sector must be taken up, and, in that regard, priorities must be set.

We appreciate the role of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes region in support of the Second Summit and of the Conference in general since its inception in 2003. We encourage the Group to continue its support throughout the implementation of the Pact. We urge all international partners to continue to provide such valuable support, particularly given the decision by the States of the region to establish a fund, in keeping with article 6 of the Pact. This will be an appropriate mechanism for providing support.

We must also recognize that previous Council resolutions must be implemented. It is of the utmost importance to the countries of the Great Lakes region, particularly in terms of putting an end to conflict, to the activities of armed groups and the myriad human rights violations. That applies also to the issue of peace and security in the subregion and to the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons in the conflict areas of the Great Lakes region.

In that context, we attach great importance to resolutions 1625 (2005), 1631 (2005), 1649 (2005) and 1653 (2006). We believe that their implementation will be crucial to the success of the mechanism that has been set up among the States of the Great Lakes region. That will serve as a vital link between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and facilitate the activities of regional, subregional and other organizations aimed at finding ways and means of addressing the problems of the region. It will also allow the Peacebuilding Commission to act positively and directly in the region so as to benefit the continent as a whole.

In terms of the challenges to implementation, we believe that sustainable development cannot be achieved without institutions based on good governance or the necessary resources, which will be available only if security and stability prevail. To that end, there must be clear and genuine participation by the peoples and the Governments of the region. There must be encouragement by all organizations of the international community so as to ensure the transparency of economic agreements reached among the countries of the region as well as between regional and international financial institutions. Such agreements must address the social and economic conditions of the region and the problem of foreign debt or, at the very least, mitigate the effects of such debt.

Addressing the causes of economic failure requires permanent projects based on sound trade and economic principles, particularly given the region's distinctive strategic location on the African continent and the fact that it has tremendous natural resources. The States of the region must therefore have local ownership of all activities and programmes on their territories.

In conclusion, we wish to express our appreciation to the Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations for its positive contributions to the activities of the Security Council in support of the outcome and Declaration of the Second Summit of the Conference, as reflected in the positive results achieved. We thank them for their draft presidential statement, which we endorse and will utilize in addressing regional issues and in supporting the efforts of current and future generations of the peoples of the region to achieve peace, security and stability.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Ms. Lintonen (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and

Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Iceland, Norway, Ukraine and Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union welcomes today's open debate, which is taking place at a time when the Great Lakes region is at an important crossroads. The European Union welcomes the positive outcome of the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, held at Nairobi last week. The Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region adopted at the Summit constitutes a cornerstone for cooperation among the States of the region.

The EU now looks forward to the implementation of the protocols and programmes of action included in the Pact through the regional follow-up mechanism. A strong local commitment will be necessary, including financial contributions and a sense of ownership by the States of the region, notably in the areas of natural resource management and regional cooperation.

The Summit and its positive outcome mark a new beginning in Central Africa and build on the important progress achieved in recent years. Starting more than a decade ago, the crisis in the Great Lakes region, which brought sorrow and suffering to millions of people, overshadowed the whole of Africa. Today we are witnessing a promising start towards a new and positive dynamic, which will, hopefully, influence Africa's overall development. We hope in particular that the powerful lessons of partnership and conflict resolution presented by the Nairobi Pact will inspire efforts to resolve the remaining conflicts in the Great Lakes region, including that in northern Uganda, which has been of such great concern to so many in the international community.

Trilateral cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and the European Union has become a distinctive trait of conflict prevention in Africa and in the Great Lakes in particular. Prior to the Nairobi Summit, that cooperation had already undergone significant tests, such as the birth of the African mission in Burundi and its subsequent transformation into a United Nations-led peacekeeping mission, and the deployment, upon the request of the United Nations, of an EU peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the electoral period.

Last week's Conference was additional proof of that cooperation and another important example of how real progress can be achieved through effective multilateralism. The EU would like once again to express its special thanks to the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his Special Representative, Ibrahima Fall, for their valuable efforts to take the Conference forward.

The EU would like also to underline the role of its own Special Representative for the Great Lakes, Aldo Ajello, who was instrumental in bringing about the idea of the Conference from its very inception.

Building on the Dar es Salaam Declaration of 2004, the Pact on Security, Stability and Development rightly defines four major domains for future cooperation in the Great Lakes region: peace and security, development and good governance, economic development and regional integration, as well as humanitarian and social issues. Much has been achieved since Dar es Salaam. From a European point of view, let me recall in particular the following three points.

First, there is the successful conclusion of the transition process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Two weeks ago, we witnessed a historic occasion: President Kabila's inauguration in Kinshasa, an auspicious event that constituted the highlight of the first democratic and transparent elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in more than 40 years.

There is truly a reason for congratulating the Congolese people, and the parties and candidates who participated in the elections, for having made this landmark achievement possible. The assisting role of the United Nations has been essential to this process. The European Union, as well, supported the electoral process and the Congolese people at this historic juncture.

The transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo clearly shows that security and development are inseparable. Inasmuch as one depends on the other, governance is the key element that provides the basis for progress in both fields. By taking the governance agenda forward, the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the international community are working closely together on developing

a shared governance vision, which may in time also take the form of a governance compact.

Once again, we hope that our joint efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will increase the momentum for similar developments throughout the entire region. Here, in the environment of a post-conflict situation, security sector reform will always be at the heart of governance initiatives. These challenges are of high priority for future European Union cooperation, and we are looking forward to engaging soon in consultations with the new elected authorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Secondly, I would like to mention the successful transition process in Burundi. The peace process initiated in August 2000 with the Arusha Accord and the political transition that followed it concluded successfully with the installation of a democratically elected Government of National Unity in August 2005. Progress has been made in the political and security situation, and military demobilization, supported by the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme funded by several European Union member States, proceeded well. In order to consolidate the demobilization achieved, a concerted effort is needed to ensure that sustainable reintegration of ex-combatants is prioritized in the period ahead in Burundi and throughout the Great Lakes region.

The ceasefire agreement concluded with the Forces nationales de libération earlier this year opened a window of opportunity for reaching a sustainable and peaceful solution to this conflict. We are all aware of the challenges linked to the implementation of this agreement, and the European Union follows all regional initiatives in this regard with great attention.

In consolidating these promising developments, the European Union will remain a reliable partner, fully committed to a constructive approach, including in the fields of governance, rule of law and further democratization of society.

Finally, let me underline the importance of the improved regional dynamics, particularly in the Great Lakes region proper. The successful transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been possible only thanks to the new dynamic of good-neighbourly relations, which is increasingly visible at the regional level. The remaining tensions and the violence in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic clearly reflect the need to foster this development. In other regions, we still face enormous challenges in cutting the supply lines for armed rebel groups and in ending cross-border violence. In the Great Lakes region, however, we have seen that this plague of violence and impunity can be reined in, provided that there is efficient and trustworthy regional cooperation, which also includes United Nations involvement.

The signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region is a very important step that consolidates the achievements made in the areas of peace, democracy and development, not only in the Great Lakes region but also for the whole of Africa. The commitments for a policy of non-violence and mutual defence in the resolution of conflicts, as much as the emphasis on cooperation in democracy, good governance, regional integration and the fight against the illegal exploitation of natural resources, define a clear way ahead.

On this encouraging path, the European Union will continue to be an active partner supporting closer cooperation and dialogue within the Great Lakes region.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mrs. Booto (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, allow me first of all to convey to you the heartfelt congratulations of my delegation for the great work you have accomplished as President of the Security Council throughout this month of December. I would like to thank you for having convened this meeting on the Great Lakes of Africa, the subject under discussion today. In particular, I wish to pay tribute to the United Republic of Tanzania for the important role it played in the decisive stage of the signing of the Dar es Salaam Declaration in November 2004, which led to more constructive interaction in the region and to the restoration of a climate of trust, which helped stave off the demons of division.

My delegation has already voiced at the highest level its recognition to His Excellency Mr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and to His Excellency Mr. Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya, who, with the invaluable assistance of His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, maximized the support of the international community to organize the Second Summit of Heads of

State in Nairobi. We would like to thank them for the important effort they have made in the cause of peace and in the resolution of the various crises in the region. I would also to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, for his very informative briefing and for his organization of the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, especially for his tireless efforts in the cause of peace in the region.

My delegation is honoured by the presence here of Her Excellency Ambassador Mulamula, the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Conference on the Great Lakes, and I congratulate her very warmly.

The Second Summit of Heads of State and Government on the Great Lakes Region was an historic event for the region as well as for the international community. Indeed, the Summit once again stressed the importance of the partnership between the countries of the Great Lakes region and the international community to build on the momentum created by the countries of the region. The Summit marks the end of the preparatory process of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, which is to identify the causes of armed conflict in the region, conflicts which have hampered the development of the countries concerned, and to permit the region to regain ownership of this fortunate initiative in order to relaunch its development.

After several mishaps, important stages were gone through, and the results are increasingly tangible. My country conscientiously took an active part in all the monitoring and follow-up mechanisms and has actively implemented the resolutions and recommendations of the various forums devoted to questions relating to the Great Lakes. We welcome the new momentum based on a new regional security order, the expansion and integration of economic and commercial space, democracy and good governance, the stabilization and improvement of the collective handling of social and humanitarian problems resulting from the internal readjustments going on in each of the Great Lakes countries, and the adaptation to the rules of this new peaceful coexistence among States.

This new agreement has been crowned with success in the signing of the regional Pact for Stability, Security and Development as an act of commitment to non-aggression and mutual defence, which lays out the optimal conditions for sustainable development. In particular, we welcome the adoption of the structure for the Special Fund for Reconstruction and Development, which will undoubtedly enhance economic progress and reconstruction by facilitating development and economic integration among countries of the region.

As proof of its goodwill, and despite the enormous challenge of reconstruction and the tasks that await these newly elected institutions, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has announced an initial contribution of $1 million to this Fund.

My delegation agrees with the Secretary-General, who stressed in his message to the Conference that ownership of the Conference by the States of the region gives the Pact an important dimension with regard to democracy, good governance and economic development. That ownership remains key, as it sets out the priorities and means for working together. It is not a vision, but a programme of action eagerly followed by millions of people in the region. As for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, our objective is to make every necessary effort to implement the programme of action, with the support of all our partners.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has been chosen as the host country for the 2008 summit, intends to be a driving political, economic and social force. It will do its all to promote respect for the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and to make the special fund for reconstruction and development operational, stressing the responsibility of each and every actor to create a zone of peace, stability and prosperity throughout the region.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo reiterates its commitment to participating in the creation of conditions of peace and security for its people and the peoples of neighbouring States. The world has seen the progress our country has made in implementing its commitments to establishing a new internal political order and to normalizing relations with neighbouring States. Thus, as we consolidate our internal political process, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has also worked concretely to meet its commitments to providing security for our neighbours.

As is well known, the transitional period in the Democratic Republic of the Congo culminated in the inauguration of Mr. Joseph Kabila as President-elect. The National Assembly has been elected and installed, as have the provincial assemblies. The Senate, local assemblies and future Government are now being established. My delegation welcomes the orderly holding of the elections. The turnout was enthusiastic and the participation of women, both as candidates and as electors, was most encouraging and a reflection of the efforts made at the national level to promote women.

With the establishment of all of the Republic's institutions, the Congolese people is now counting on the ongoing support of the international community as it pursues policies to foster national reconciliation, economic and social recovery, and national reconstruction.

In conclusion, I thank the Security Council, which has always been dedicated to the cause of peace in the Great Lakes region. The Council has identified three principal and closely linked aspects of the insane regional conflict that should be addressed in parallel: the outcome of the inter-Congolese dialogue, the withdrawal of foreign forces from our national territory, and the disarmament, demobilization and repatriation of armed groups. That has had a favourable impact not only on my country, but also in the broader context of the Great Lakes region.

Finally, I reiterate my country's gratitude to the international community for its attention to the launching of a new era of relations based on trust, security and mutual benefit for all States of the Great Lakes region.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. McNee (Canada): I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Netherlands and Canada, co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region. The Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and the Declaration on the Implementation of the Pact, both signed in Nairobi on 15 December, inaugurate a new era of cooperation in the Great Lakes region. In that context, I thank you very much, Sir, for having organized this meeting today.

The 11 member States of the region will drive the implementation of all the integral parts of the Pact. A key element of their full ownership of that unprecedented endeavour is the creation of the first coordination mechanism for the Great Lakes region. We congratulate Burundi, chosen to host the seat of the follow-up mechanism, and we warmly congratulate Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, chosen on behalf of Tanzania as Executive Secretary to head the new mechanism.

The launching of the secretariat in its initial months will be full of expectation and challenges as well. For that reason, the Group of Friends will extend its financial support for a six-month transition period as core countries take over secretariat functions for the Conference and consolidate their national coordination mechanisms.

(*spoke in French*)

I would like to commend the joint United Nations-African Union secretariat and its team of experts, under the leadership of Mr. Ibrahima Fall, for their unflagging commitment and their contribution to the success of the Conference.

The Group of Friends supports the request initially made by Tanzania on behalf of the countries of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region for a three-month extension until 31 March of the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. That will facilitate the transition from the joint United Nations-African Union secretariat to the new secretariat of the countries of the Conference.

On behalf of Canada, I wish to indicate that my country also supports the call, made in paragraph 9 of the Declaration on Implementation of the Pact, on the United Nations and the African Union to remain committed and to support the new secretariat for at least one year. We hope that the newly created secretariat will enjoy the support of the United Nations and the African Union for a year.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the representative of Rwanda.

Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda): We wish to thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to address the Security Council on the important issue of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region that took place last week in Nairobi, Kenya.

We wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, and Ms. Mulamula, the first Executive Secretary of the Great Lakes Conference Secretariat, for their presentations. We also wish to thank the Government of Kenya for graciously hosting the Conference and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for having so ably chaired the summit of the International Conference for the past two years.

The Great Lakes region has registered several positive developments since the signing of the Dar es Salaam Declaration in 2004. The people of Burundi have moved from many years of conflict to a new democratic dispensation. They have now begun the difficult task of post-conflict recovery and development. We congratulate them and call upon the international community to support them.

In that same period, the peoples of the Republic of Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania also exercised their democratic right to elect their leaders in free and fair elections. Most recently, the Democratic Republic of the Congo held democratic elections for the first time in four decades. We warmly congratulate the Government and people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the success of that historic election. We pledge our full support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo as it begins to address the numerous difficult tasks that lie ahead. We remain fully confident that, with the Great Lakes region working together in a spirit of genuine partnership, we shall find solutions to the outstanding issues.

The 11 core countries should congratulate themselves for successfully bringing the preparatory process of the International Conference to its logical conclusion. Since 2003, we have worked together to give shape and direction to this process. We have frankly discussed the peace, security, governance and economic challenges our region faces. We have reached agreements on the way forward, in order to turn our region from one characterized by conflict to a region characterized by peace, stability and sustainable development.

The Conference process has allowed for the broad participation of important sectors of our societies. These have included, among others, Government officials, representatives of women, youth, civil society, media professionals, the private sector and religious leaders. Through constant interaction, a sense of partnership and friendship has developed across the region. A genuine understanding of the challenges that each individual country faces is developing. This can only be good for the future of our region.

Of course, the process has also had challenging moments. Sometimes, we struggled to re-focus the Conference to deal with the key issues that the region faces, instead of promoting the ideas of some who prefer to see our region continuously divided and in conflict.

In the past, some Powers saw the Conference process as a vehicle to bestow a new political acceptability to the forces that committed genocide in Rwanda. They claimed that the process would not advance so long as these forces, the *genocidaires*, were not at the table, either as participants or as observers. I am glad that, by working together, the region said "no". Now, we have before us agreements on what we need to do collectively to deal with those who want to destabilize our countries. We have also agreed to cooperate in combating impunity by bringing these *genocidaires* to justice and to work together to combat their divisive and destructive ideology.

The leaders of the Great Lakes region have already committed themselves to advance the agenda for peace. We have agreed that we shall not allow our territories to be used as bases for the destabilization of other countries. We have agreed on the need for peaceful resolution of conflicts, respect for the territorial integrity of all our countries and promotion of the principles of good governance. We have also agreed to work together to promote development and to cooperate in reducing poverty in our region. This is a very important agenda. As we come to the end of the preparatory phase, therefore, we must also commit ourselves to implementation of this agenda.

We believe that implementation of the peace Pact's programmes of action will be an important cornerstone in the architecture for peace in our region. As peace, stability, good governance and economic development are established and consolidated throughout the region, the humanitarian crises we periodically face will recede accordingly.

The core countries of the Great Lakes region decided to take regional ownership of the process through the establishment of the regional follow-up mechanism to help us implement this ambitious

agenda. In order for us to succeed, however, we believe that there must be strong commitment to do the following things. First, we must commit ourselves to implement all the provisions of the Pact, especially those dealing with the key issues of armed groups still operating in our region. The implementation phase should be a time for serious action in this regard. Secondly, we must commit ourselves to ratify the Pact as expeditiously as possible. Thirdly, we must extend all the necessary political, diplomatic, and financial support to the follow-up mechanism, and especially to the new secretariat. Fourthly, we must work to make the special fund for reconstruction, hosted by the African Development Bank, operational as soon as possible.

The agenda for peace and development in the Great Lakes region will continue to need strong international partnerships. I thank those members of the international community who have worked together with us in the search for peace. I wish to thank, in particular, the Group of Friends, who have been valued partners. I also thank the African Union ar d the United Nations for their support through the Secretariat. International partnership is crucial, particularly in the context of post-conflict recovery.

Leaders in the region have considerable experience in leading the search for peace in our region. From the Arusha peace process in 1993 for Rwanda, the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and Sun City peace process for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Arusha peace process for Burundi, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement for the Sudan, and the Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD)-led process for Somalia, it is clear that we have the capacity and the will to resolve conflict. What we have always needed is support in post-conflict recovery and reconstruction. We therefore hope that our partners will not consider the end of the preparatory process as an end to their support. We would encourage them to support the implementation phase, especially the economic growth and poverty reduction agenda.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Mr. Ibrahima Fall to respond to comments and questions raised.

Mr. Fall: Mr. President, with your permission, I will be very brief, taking into account the lateness of the hour.

First of all, I would like to thank the speakers who have taken the floor and who have shown great interest in the outcome of the Nairobi summit, and to thank them for their congratulations. I take it that these felicitations go beyond myself, to each and every member of the team with whom I have been working over the last years and, even beyond the team of the Office of the Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, to the representatives of the United Nations agencies, with whom we have worked very closely in the Steering Committee in Nairobi during these years.

I take it also that those congratulations extend to the African Union, the other part of the joint secretariat, and beyond that to President Konaré, who was very actively involved in the preparation of the entire process leading to the Dar es Salaam and Nairobi Summits and who played a very important role during the Summits.

I was very encouraged by today's debate, especially by its focus on the need for the African Union and the United Nations to continue jointly to support the new Conference Secretariat and for ensuring that they continue to be involved in a very proactive way in conflict prevention, in peacemaking and in peacebuilding in the whole region of the Great Lakes.

Last but not least, I hope that the core countries have received the message that the Council has sent to them and that they will take the opportunity to show that they can face the challenges of building up the Conference Secretariat and operationalizing it in the three-month period that has been decided upon.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Fall for the clarifications he has provided and wish him every success in his mission.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council commends the countries of the Great Lakes region for the successful conclusion of the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, in Nairobi, Kenya, on 15 December 2006.
>
> "The Security Council congratulates regional leaders on the signing of the Pact on

Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and welcomes their commitment to its implementation.

"The Security Council further welcomes the decision to establish a regional follow-up mechanism, to include a Conference Secretariat headed by the first Executive Secretary, Ambassador Liberata Mulamula of the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as the decision to establish the offices of the Conference Secretariat in Bujumbura, Burundi.

"The Security Council pays tribute to the joint African Union/United Nations Secretariat, the Friends of the Great Lakes Region co-chaired by Canada and the Netherlands, the United Nations lead agencies, the African Union, the European Union, the African Development Bank and the international community for their support and assistance to the International Conference process.

"The Security Council also pays tribute to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative Mr. Ibrahima Fall for their support, commitment and effective facilitation of the process leading to the convening of the Second Summit and the signing of the peace Pact.

"The Security Council supports the request of the regional inter-ministerial Committee to extend the mandate of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for a final period of three months, until 31 March 2007, with a view to ensuring regional ownership of the follow-up mechanism and completing successfully the transition to the Conference Secretariat.

"The Security Council appeals to the countries of the region, the Group of Friends, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and the international community to consider providing assistance to the Conference Secretariat and the Special Fund for Reconstruction and Development in the Great Lakes Region to support implementation by the parties of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2006/57.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.